

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Maricopa County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) is to promote, preserve, and protect the health of the people and communities in Maricopa County. As part of this mission, the Divisions of Maternal, Child and Family Health and Epidemiology/Bio-Defense Preparedness and Response (BDPR) conduct an annual maternal and child health needs assessment.

The purpose of the needs assessment is to evaluate the status of maternal and child health (MCH) in Maricopa County and assist the MCH programs with identifying needs. The topics selected are based on the Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Women and Children's Health requirements¹ and Healthy People 2000 and 2010 national objectives^{2,3}. These objectives are goals set for the nation to achieve by the years 2000 and 2010, measured by specific health indicators (see Healthy People comparison table on previous page). These documents provide tools to measure improvements in the quality and number of years of healthy life and reduction of health disparities between groups of people.

The 2002 Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment is an examination of selected maternal and child health indicators for the county as a whole. The assessment begins with the county's demographic profile. Next, the demographic characteristics of mothers and newborns are presented followed by an assessment of nine topics in Maternal and Child Health:

- 1) substance use,
- 2) prenatal care,
- 3) preterm births,
- 4) low birth weight,
- 5) infant mortality,
- 6) teen pregnancy,
- 7) multiple births,
- 8) newborn intensive care units, and
- 9) maternal and newborn transfers.

When appropriate, these topics are examined by several demographic indicators including race/ethnicity, age, educational level, and others. Comparisons between Maricopa County, Arizona, the United States and Healthy People 2000 (HP 2000) and 2010 (HP 2010) objectives are provided when appropriate.